

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 9 in which the bending moment is exerted on the softened first bending section at least partly by a wall part of the first bending section.
3. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 9 in which the bending moment is exerted on the softened first bending section at least partly by a support member of the first clamping means.
4. (Original) The method of claim 3 in which the support member is a rim of a guiding aperture of the first clamping means.
5. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 9 comprising the following steps:
 - the discharge tube is initially fastened at a third end of a starting bending section with first clamping means and
 - a fourth end of the starting bending section of the discharge tube is fastened, the fourth end being opposite the third end,
 - the starting bending section is heated to a softening temperature,
 - a bending force is exerted between the third end and the fourth end of the softened starting bending section to achieve the desired radius or direction of curvature of the starting bending section, and

the fastening of the fourth end of the softening starting section and the bending force to the softened starting section is effected with second clamping means.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9 in which the first end of the softened first bending section is translated or tilted during the bending of the first endingbending section.

7. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 9 in which the discharge tube is formed as a double helix, and the starting section is adjacent to the central portion, and two legs of the discharge tube on two sides of the central portion are wound into the double helix form simultaneously.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7 in which the central portion of the discharge tube is formed to a cold chamber portion, and the starting sections of the discharge tube are held in oriented position by fastening the cold chamber portion.

9. (Previously Amended) A method of forming a discharge tube for a low-pressure discharge lamp, the discharge tube having at least one curved section, the method comprising the steps of:

fastening a first end of a first bending section of the discharge tube with first clamping means,

holding a second end of the first bending section of the discharge tube in an oriented position, the second end being opposite the first end,

heating the first bending section to a softening temperature,

exerting the bending moment of the softened first bending section between the first end and the second end of the softened first bending section for achieving the desired radius or direction of curvature of the first bending section, in which

the holding of the second end of the softened first bending section and the exertion of the bending moment on the softened first bending section is effected

at least partly with a re-solidified second bending section of the discharge tube, the re-solidified second bending section being adjacent to the softened first bending section

forming a central portion of the discharge tube to an S-shape in a molding form before bending with the bending movement.

10. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 9 in which the softened section is shifted along the principal longitudinal axis of the discharge tube substantially continuously.

11. (Previously Amended) A method of forming a discharge tube for a low-pressure discharge lamp, the discharge tube having at least one curved section, the method comprising the steps of:

fastening a first end of a first bending section of the discharge tube with first clamping means,

holding a second end of the first bending section of the discharge tube in an oriented position, the second end being opposite the first end,

heating the first bending section to a softening temperature,

exerting the bending moment of the softened first bending section between the first end and the second end of the softened first bending section for achieving the desired radius or direction of curvature of the first bending section, in which

the holding of the second end of the softened first bending section and the exertion of the bending moment on the softened first bending section is effected at least partly with a re-solidified second bending section of the discharge tube, the re-solidified second bending section being adjacent to the softened first bending section,

portions of the discharge tube are pre-heated to a temperature below the softening temperature before bending.

12. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 9 in which the bending section is heated with any of the group containing hot air, gas flames or heating wire.

13. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 9 in which the bent portions of the discharge tube are actively cooled to a temperature below the solidification temperature after bending.

14. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 9 in which the bent section is cooled with any of the group containing cold air, liquid spray, convection cooling, radiation cooling.

15. (Previously Amended) A method of forming a discharge tube for a low-pressure discharge lamp, the discharge tube having at least one curved section, the method comprising the steps of:

fastening a first end of a first bending section of the discharge tube with first clamping means,

holding a second end of the first bending section of the discharge tube in an oriented position, the second end being opposite the first end,

heating the first bending section to a softening temperature,

exerting the bending moment of the softened first bending section between the first end and the second end of the softened first bending section for achieving the desired radius or direction of curvature of the first bending section, in which

the holding of the second end of the softened first bending section and the exertion of the bending moment on the softened first bending section is effected at least partly with a re-solidified second bending section of the discharge tube, the re-solidified second bending section being adjacent to the softened first bending section,

the internal pressure of the discharge tube is varied during the bending of the first bending section.

16. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 9 in which the length of the softened first bending section is less than six times the diameter of the discharge tube.